

Honorable Affiliates:

INTENT:

By the grace of God, I am able to live in a time when the “Hereford & United States v. Huntsville City Schools” case would be revisited. I have nothing but the utmost respect for those individuals bold enough to pursue the culmination of this unraveled influence. I share that same regard with those within a capacity to facilitate its mediation.

As a graduate of the oldest high school in the state of Alabama, this particular imprint in American history weighs heavy on my soul. During the 1960s there was no special interest in truly enforcing the integration law of the land. My school, originally Mobile High School now S.S. Murphy High School, did not admit a student of color for at least 120 years of its existence.

Because of the exercise of justice displayed in Huntsville, I was able to become one of the few Blacks ever to play on the MHS Golf Team. I was also privileged to become a 2 time Red Band (Highest Alabama Honor) All – State Musician, I was the 1<sup>st</sup> Black Brass Captain, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Black Band Captain in the school’s history. I participated in the original St. Patrick’s Day parade in Dublin, Ireland, and performed all across the United States. Let me also remind you that this school served as a charter member of the State Board of Education and was a charter member for the IB program implementation in Alabama, each were indeed apart of our daily educational structure. All students deserve similar experiences, best fitting their personality.

With the compassion, love and strength of God – I provide these comments, in the interest of young people. My sincere prayer is reserved for every individual involved and affected by this occurrence. Though I am but a vessel, my Christian allegiance calls me to engage in the political operations of our community. Someone must be responsible for submitting solutions to ensure that all children can be exposed to the very best that an academic tenure can offer. I boldly and humbly accept that task.

LINEAGE:

In 2011 I took on a permanent assignment at J.O. Johnson High School. This was the first time that I had an opportunity to help young people at this school since 2008 when I organized a program called C.S.P.O.T (College Students Preparing Our Teens) as a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student at Alabama A&M University. I began subbing in the school system in 2009. I mainly served middle and elementary schools until 2011, the same year of my college graduation.

In 2012, then JOJ principal granted my organization: “Success 4 the Future” an opportunity to implement the ‘Summer Enrichment Program’ on the school campus. This saved the hundreds of thousands of dollars we didn’t have to purchase a building that could adequately facilitate our activities. It also presented a resolution to the millions of dollars we lacked to erect a building.

As the Assistant Band Director, Head Music Arranger, Special Needs Instructor and as well the Keynote Speaker for the Black History Program, I definitely found my home at J.O. Johnson High School. To now also be able to utilize my non – profit to help young people, I knew that a difference could be made.

We now have reached 2015. Since then I have been terminated from Huntsville City Schools and very minimal improvements have been made in justifying unitary status. We still live in a dual scholastic era here in Huntsville, Alabama. Because I decided to become vocal about this indifference, I lost my job. Though my imposed struggle has indeed been one of horrific turbulence, my position holds no girth when compared to the unfortunate position our young people are forced to live, because of fiscal political ideological methods enforced during their academic tenure.

Our schools feel and often look like prisons. Because our children are caged in they act like animals. When the learning atmosphere is disruptive, students suffer and therefore do not score well on assessments nor do they cultivate an element of creativity that inspires positive independent discovery.

If one school receives more funding than another and still does not equate to the level of excellence that the lesser funded school exudes, then this is not only a sign of poor instruction but also poor administration of fund allocation. Yet the ones who will be publicized through the media will be the failing students.

Not that closing schools would be enough to get rid of a growing lineage of calamity, teachers have also been instructed to disregard certain disciplinary referrals and promote certain students regardless of their competency and qualification to assist data filings. We also find where teachers with unwavering investments in community schools were uprooted and replaced by individuals who often dread turning down the streets that lead to those very communities.

We witness where young people in under performing areas are invited to attend educational events all over the world, but are declined by District administration, because of stereotypical discrepancies. While other schools of high performing areas are granted discretionary traveling leisure.

Schools in Northwest Huntsville suffer because of an oppressive identity that has been instilled in the current culture for quite sometime now. When you replace principals and teachers year after year, you penetrate the mental psyche of a young person negatively. Involuntarily young people assume that something is their fault. The young person would then struggle with trust, which leads to unnecessary outbursts, lack of value in order, methods of isolation, and complacent inclusive ways of thinking.

If Huntsville City Schools wishes to obtain unitary status, the consent order must adopt certain revisions. Several of those I will address in this document. Each local entity deserves the ability to operate its own systems, especially those that pertain to public

service. I pray that the courts will take these notes and those to be contributed at a later date for genuine benefit of our children and their future!

OBSERVATIONS/AMENDMENTS:

- Huntsville City Schools will allocate a minimum of \$120K annually to resource programs not offered in the curriculum and instructors not employed by the district, to foster character development, innovative career development, and additional extracurricular activities not offered at the schools were there is definite interest.
- Huntsville City Schools will designate a committee or group of interested employees to ensure that every elementary school has an affordable 21<sup>st</sup> century after school program that fits the economic stature and scholastic need of the represented community.
- If a grandfather clause is issued to resolve rezoning discrepancies in certain areas of the community, then the Northwest high school will retain the name J.O. Johnson.
- The College Academy will be dissolved as a magnet program, then re-established and implemented as a District wide project offered to all high schools for students that qualify.
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CONCLUSION:

Our children are nothing more than what they are exposed to. Much of the troubles found in predominately Black schools stem from lack of understanding from those public officials responsible for ensuring a great quality education for all students. As times change our approaches must change. And unfortunately, overtime in Huntsville, we have not adapted. Certain schools have increased in academic excellence amazingly, while other schools have consistently declined and suffered grand academic turmoil.

The Department of Justice has the ordained opportunity to correct the wrong doings of its absence over the years involving this case. Because the federal courts have not embraced the Huntsville community, issues have escalated to the state in which they are in now. The DOJ must be especially mindful to acknowledge the sensitivity of this matter all while embracing the urgency to make a lasting difference in the community.

The Superintendent and his administration have had nearly 4 years to document substantial improvements in all schools. We notice that our predominately Black schools have made fewer improvements than anytime before his hiring. It is truly safe to say that other solutions and methods of improvement should be seriously considered and allowed for experimentation.

In efforts to provide ideas of conflict resolution and peace making, I have included sample works to support my hopes for Huntsville City Schools. Instead of simply complaining about the issues that we face, I wish to become apart of the blame. I want to sit at the table with the decision makers that we would be able to collaborate and put into operation cohesive ideas for the betterment of the overall community.

Unfortunately, our children aren't being raised in respectful environments. Through the streets, media, music, and the internet, so many negative things have penetrated the minds of our young people. Until we find methods to counteract that negative, we will never witness the full potential of student success. So before we become overly inclined to a proposed method of strategic education, let us cultivate initiatives that service the open expectancy of a valuable education.

We are the writers of the new history. When our children's children are reviewing this and other similar cases, will the majority be thankful like I am that school integration was implemented... Or will the majority finally conclude that integration was the worse solution to educational equality.

Thank you for your time in reading this text. Please review all attachments.

Kindest Regards,

Reggie

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